

## Another Look Back

### To the Editor:

The most interesting and informative "A Look Back" by your predecessor, Peter H. Byers, which appeared in the December 1999 issue of the *Journal* (pp. 1487–1488), contained an error that needs correction. You were introduced as "the first nonclinician to edit the *Journal*," and this was considered by Dr. Byers to be one of the factors boding well for the journal.

One of the most distinguished previous editors, Arthur G. Steinberg (A.G.S.), was also a nonclinician, with a Ph.D. in *Drosophila* genetics from Columbia University. During his term as Editor, beginning with Volume 8 (1956) and ending with Volume 13 (1961), the discipline of human genetics underwent dramatic changes as it grew enormously. In looking back on his period as Editor, Steinberg (1995) analyzed the topics most often reported on and found that they were "blood groups, various diseases, population genetics, statistical methods in human genetics, mutations and linkage." He also relates how he became disturbed by some of the reviews submitted by referees and therefore ruled that referees would no longer be anonymous. Although "the reviews were greatly improved the referees were not happy with my objection to anonymity" and "the policy was abandoned by my successor and has remained so."

In an "Appreciation" of A.G.S. (Fraser et al. 1995), we learn from Alexander G. Bearn that A.G.S. served on the Board of Directors of the American Society of Human Genetics for 10 years and became its president in 1964. A.G.S. was also the founding editor of *Progress in Medical Genetics* (the first volume appeared in 1961), and, in the following year, Alexander Bearn joined him as coeditor of the publication, which continued through 16 volumes (a span of 22 years) before the editorship passed into the hands of Barton Childs, Neil A. Holtz-

man, Haig H. Kazazian, Jr., and David L. Valle. John M. Opitz, in the same Appreciation, ranks A.G.S. as one of the greatest editors in the field of human genetics, with Penrose and Cotterman.

Arthur Steinberg is alive and well and living in Cleveland, having retired in 1982 from the Department of Biology at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). He has recently been honored by CWRU, from which he received the 1999 Frank and Dorothy Hovorka Prize, recognizing "outstanding achievements in teaching, research, and scholarly service which have benefited the community, nation, and world."

Arthur told me some years ago that he stopped attending congresses when the mention of his name occasioned one of two responses, "Steinberg, Steinberg. Never heard of him!" or "Steinberg. Is he still alive?"

I should like to take this opportunity of wishing you, the new Editor of the *Journal*, a happy and fulfilling term of office. The fact that you are not the first nonclinician to be appointed Editor can in no way detract from your qualifications to fill the role with distinction!

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